have. There are lots of parts of the world that make me nervous, but not because we are absent from them."

Of more concern to CIA executives than the number of agents overseas is the fact that many of them are relatively old for the cloak-and-dagger business. Twenty-seven percent of field personnel are over 50. Says one agency official: "Where we are short is on young blood. We let the pipeline dry out. But we will remedy that."

What's Next for the CIA?

With all its troubles, most American and Allied intelligence experts rate the CIA as the best in the world at what it does.

From a senior European security officer: "The CIA works hard and digs deep. Probably nobody else, including the Russians, amasses a greater volume of information. Yet there appear to be specific gaps and weaknesses in the final product."

The CIA's Carlucci says: "I don't think there is any question but what we are the foremost intelligence operation in the world—over all. In technology, we're ahead. On the analytic side, we're clearly ahead."

A top Pentagon official notes: "Our intelligence is still by far the best in the world, far better than the Russians'. You're never as good as you would like to be, but we're the best in the world—better across the board."

A ranking military-intelligence specialist has some reservations: "We clearly have the best intelligence-gathering technology in the world. But I think the Soviet Union may have the most effective intelligence apparatus in the world. Their leaders know better what we are doing than we know of what they are doing."

From these wide-ranging conversations with intelligence "producers" and "consumers" in the U.S. and abroad, what overall conclusions emerge concerning the current health of the CIA and its prospects?

The intelligence agency under Turner has recovered much of the trust Congress had lost in it. The lawmakers are less interested in imposing new restrictions to guard against excesses than they are in preventing any further weakening of the nation's espionage capabilities.

But there is still no sign that Congress is prepared to allow the agency to engage again in the kinds of covert operations abroad that a decade ago constituted a major U.S. weapon against Soviet machinations around the world.

Recapturing the confidence of potential agents overseas and of foreign intelligence organizations is a tougher proposition as long as former agency staff members, as well as members of Congress and administration officials, continue to leak CIA secrets.

The jury is still out on the long-term impact of the "Turner revolution"—whether it actually will lead to a more efficient and effective intelligence operation. But many doubt that the potential benefits will justify the continuing turmoil throughout the intelligence community.

There is a consensus that controversy will dog the CIA as long as the former admiral remains at the helm. But the prospect of a change is widely discounted. For Turner still seems to command the confidence of the one man who counts most—his former Annapolis classmate now in the White House. □

This article was written by Associate Editor Orr Kelly, with assistance from other staff members in Washington and overseas.

Interview With CIA Director Stansfield Turner

Admiral Turner's View: Turmoil "Has Been Worth It"

Sagging morale, mass resignations, too many leaks, failure in Iran. To understand the charges, says the nation's intelligence chief, it's necessary to grasp revolutionary changes in the business of spying.

Q. Admiral Turner, has the CIA been emasculated in the past several years, as critics allege?

A. Actually, I think it's much better than in the past. The technological collection systems have come along, and they're constantly growing in capability. And our sophistication in utilizing them is increasing.

There is more productive activity in the human-intelligence field today than there was last year or the year before. It's just as important to us, and it's being emphasized more and more.

Q. You have been criticized for filling most of the top jobs in the agency with outside amateurs. Why have you done that?

A. I brought in a group of seasoned people, not amateurs. Frank Carlucci, the deputy director of the CIA, played an intelligence role as an ambassador, as head of a country team. John Koehler, who's in charge of budgets, came from the Congressional Budget Office and from the Rand Corporation. He's well familiar with the budgeting process. Gen. Frank Camm, who is in charge of tasking, is a man with 30-some years of military experience. No military man ever has been in command without commanding intelligence assets as well as combat assets. So my "vice presidents" are not inexperienced in the kinds of things that are needed here.

But the operating elements of the CIA—the clandestine collection, the scientific collection, fields where you need people who have been there for years—are run by CIA professionals.

In addition, I believe that it was a good time to give a new perspective on intelligence because there are profound changes that affect the intelligence world.

Q. What are these changes?

A. First, the U.S. role in the world is changing. Second, technology is changing in the way you do intelligence. Third, the American public is much more interested in what we in the intelligence community do than it was 10 years ago. And fourth, the CIA is maturing. It's graduated its first generation. We're coming into a new era in the agency.

In light of these changes, I think it has been important at this stage to have people with an open mind.

Q. Why do we hear so much about morale problems at the CIA and early retirement of so many of your people?

A I've tried to point out there are a lot of frustrations as you make substantial changes. And, yes, some people get discouraged because they just don't know how to adjust to these changes.

One of the factors is the maturing of the CIA that I mentioned earlier. Twenty-seven percent of our clandestine professionals are 50 years of age and older. We can't tolerate that, because there's going to be a gap somewhere. That's why I peeled some off a year ago—because I wanted to start filling that gap sooner, instead of letting them all stay another three or four years and then suddenly finding I have over 30 percent who would be leaving within 2, 3 or 4 years of each other.

We've got a real problem here in that we've matured without bringing along the replacements in adequate measure. And because of that, there are a lot of people leaving.

And, lastly, let me say that our government induces people to leave. Take one of the fellows who retired last January 12—that was the magic date around here for a lot of technical reasons. If he had stayed another year and a half, his annual retirement for the rest of his life would have been a couple of thousand dollars less every year.

Q. Your critics say that you've created a great deal of turmoil in an agency that already was demoralized. Was it necessary?

A Oh, no question it's been worth it, in my view. You don't adapt to the forces of change that I've described without some unsettling.

Take, for example, the greater openness and control. I don't think any public institution can thrive that doesn't have the support of the American people. We lost a great deal of that support because of a strong suspicion that we're doing things we shouldn't be doing.

We've become more open—publishing more, giving more interviews, answering press responses more—so that the American public will understand better what we are doing.

On top of that, the country has established a set of controls for intelligence today such as has never been exercised before in any intelligence operation in the world of this magnitude. We have to expose much more of what we do to the intelligence-oversight board, to the National Security Council and to the two oversight committees of the Congress. These are very traumatic experiences for intelligence professionals to go through.

Q. Can you run an effective intelligence organization with so much accountability and openness?

A I think we can. But it'll be two or three more years before I can say we are doing it. It will take a refining of the procedures in our dealings with the intelligence committees, with the oversight board and so on. In my opinion, this is moving in a healthy direction.

Q. Are foreign intelligence agencies, such as the British and Israeli, reluctant to cooperate with you for fear of compromising their secrets?

A There's no question that people are nervous about that. Where we are most vulnerable is in what's known as covert action—influencing events, not collecting intelligence. The Hughes-Ryan Amendment requires us to report to seven committees on covert actions. We would like to see that narrowed to the two congressional oversight committees. That would help.

But let me suggest that other countries are beginning to face the same problem. In Britain, the Official Secrets Act is now on weaker ground. The Germans have a Bundestag committee that came over and talked to me about what we are doing. The Italians have moved part of their intelligence out of the military into the Prime Minister's office.

In short, democracies are no longer as comfortable with unaccountable intelligence people around. We're blazing the trail in finding out how to get the right balance between necessary secrecy and accountability. I think we're coming out well.

Q. With so many congressional committees in the act, have covert actions become impossible?

A No. But it is most difficult to undertake a covert activity where there's a high probability of a lot of controversy over it.

Q. So, for all practical purposes, potentially controversial covert actions have been turned off—

A Yes. On the other hand, what this means is that there's more likely to be a national consensus behind any covert action undertaken today than there was in the past. I think it should be that way.

Q. Turning to the criticism of the agency's political analysis: What do you say to charges that you are devoting too much of your resources to day-to-day developments—competing with daily papers—rather than working on long-term trends?

A They're right. We've been working for two years to start shifting it. But it can't be done overnight. The intelligence community—more so in Defense than in the CIA—has a culture that's oriented toward current intelligence. The rewards go to the quick-response people.

It's taking a while to shift that emphasis, and it's causing turmoil. Some people are unhappy because they don't want to get shunted off in what they think is a closet where they'll be doing long-term research. That is just one of the fundamental changes that must be made in the way we handle the analytic process. And, of course, it's disconcerting to people.

Q. Wasn't President Carter expressing dissatisfaction with the job you've done by writing a memo complaining of inadequacies in political intelligence in the Iran crisis?

A The memo was addressed to three people—Cyrus Vance, Zbigniew Brzezinski and myself. The thrust of it was: "Are you guys bringing it all together?" Most of the information that was lacking was available without a spy in the system or a satellite. I'm not trying to absolve myself or the agency or the intelligence community. This memo isn't the first I've had that's been critical.

Critical memos are not the only ones I have received. I've received handwritten memos in both directions, over and above this one that got blown up unnecessarily. And I would hardly think that I could go through two years in this job without some constructive suggestion from my boss.

Q. Where did you go wrong in Iran?

A It wasn't as though we were sitting here and saying to the President, "Gee, it's sweetness and light in Iran." We were reporting there were all kinds of problems. But most of us felt they wouldn't coalesce into a big enough problem that the Shah couldn't handle. I think most people felt that here's a guy with a police force, with an army, with a one-man government. What inhibitions does he have in suppressing these things? The Shah himself didn't judge it right.

So the fact that we misjudged that the situation would boil over is not a true measure of whether the intelligence community is serving the country properly. I don't guarantee that I'll predict the next coup, the next overthrow of government, the next election surprise.

More than making those predictions, what we're here for is to be sure the policymakers see the trends that they can do something about. Even if I'd told the policymakers on October 5 that there was going to be a major upheaval on November 5 in Iran, there was nothing they could do.

Q. We've been hearing a great deal lately about a "mole" in the CIA—that is, a KGB agent who has penetrated your agency. Does that worry you?

A Well, it's an annoyance. I have no evidence that makes me concerned that we've got a mole. But I'll never say that we don't have one, because I don't want to be complacent. ☐